

The Asia-Pacific Field Study:
Higher Education Redefined through Immersive Learning

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

Toni Stoermann

Jonathan Isbill

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Jayanthi Kandiah

Ball State University

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Abstract:

Studying abroad is a life changing experience for almost everyone. Those who partake learn new perspectives, experience other cultures, and they face and overcome unique challenges. Spending time abroad changes and grows a person like few other experiences could. Ball State offers a unique way of studying abroad through their Field Studies, which allow students to accompany a professor through a culture, or several, for a period of time. During this time they are immersed in the culture, and allowed to have experiences they could never have without the help of the professor and Ball State as a whole. The experience they gain during these trips prepare them for their lives beyond college in giving them a whole new worldview. It helps them gain skills in cross-cultural communication, and increases their exposure to global health and nutrition. For the past sixteen years the Asia Pacific Field Study particularly accomplishes these goals by taking students into four unique cultures and providing them with experiences in several settings, from health, to religion, to popular tourist attractions. It takes learning beyond the classroom and into hands on experiences that will not easily be forgotten. Over the years the study has impacted students of all different walks of life. Two of these students, Jonathan Isbill and Toni Stoermann, undertook to develop a website that would showcase the trip and its inspiring leader, Dr. Jayanthi Kandiah. Through the site they provided a way for future students to get exposure to the field study, and assist any other visitors who wish to learn more about one of Ball State's immersive study abroad opportunities, or even offering faculty an example of what a field study could look like if they wished to start one.

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